Institutions, Social Networks, and Conflicts in Guinea-Bissau: Results from a 2005 Survey

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CHAPTER 3

Institutions, Social Networks, and Conflicts in Guinea-Bissau

Results from a 2005 Survey

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Guinea-Bissau endured a major conflict in 1998 and has suffered from persistent political instability since independence. After a brief review of indicators of governance in Guinea-Bissau and recent political developments, the objective of this Chapter is to provide results from a recent survey that gives insights into the opinions of the population, among others, about changes in well-being over time, trust in various institutions, sources of conflicts at the local level, and ways to deal with conflicts. There is a clear perception among citizens that there has been a decline in well-being as a result of the conflict, as well as a lack of improvement since then, at least for those in poverty who are highly vulnerable. The data suggest an increase in the lack of security after the conflict and no clear sign of improvement. The population has little trust in national institutions such as the army, the police, the judicial system, and the central government. Local conflicts often emerge because of the competition for scarce productive resources, but poorer households deal with these conflicts differently than wealthier households.

Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the HDI index the country is ranked 172nd (among 177) in the 2004 Human Development Report (UNDP 2004). It is estimated that 65.7 percent of the population live in poverty and 21.6 percent in extreme poverty. Guinea-Bissau's economy is based on farming and fishing, which represent about 63 percent of GDP. The agricultural sector

8. The authors are grateful to Momar Sylla for providing the Guinea-Bissau 2002 survey data, Clarence Tsimpo and Edward Creppy for processing part of the data from the 2005 IPSA survey, and finally to Ilda Lourenço-Lindell for sharing research on livelihoods in Guinea-Bissau.

generates 80 percent of the employment, and contributes about 50 percent to the PIB and 90 percent of exports (through cashew nuts, essentially). The official development assistance received represents a very large share of the gross national income.

Since its independence from Portugal in 1974, Guinea-Bissau has been characterized by the increasing isolation of state bureaucracies and continuing political disarray. Governance has suffered from a gap between state and civil society, which marked the transition from colonial administration to independent democratic rule (Forrest 2003). As a result, public administration has been characterized by hypertrophy, disorganization of its components, and incapacity to fulfill its functions and provide public services. After independence, the country was ruled under a one-party system. The first multiparty elections were held in 1994. Nevertheless, even after those elections, political leadership used authoritarian strategies to hold on to power and internal divisions led to growing factionalism and institutional paralysis.

The persistence of political instability has arisen in part because of social fragmentation. The population is highly diverse. The country has more than 20 different ethnic groups, with no group having an absolute majority. The five largest ethnic groups are Balanta (28 percent), Fula (23 percent), Mandinga (13 percent), Manjaco (11 percent), and Pepel (7 percent). The other 15 or so ethnic groups represent about 18 percent of the population. The urban/rural distribution of the groups suggests that Balanta and Pepel are more concentrated in rural areas, whereas the Manjaco, Fula, and Mandinga tend to reside in urban areas. Most of the population is Muslim (40 percent)—mainly drawn from the Eastern groups, such as the Fula and Mandinga—or Animist (37 percent), followed by Catholic (17 percent), and other religions (6 percent). In general, different stakeholders, such as various political forces, ethnic groups, and the military have evolved into a closed network isolated from each other. The pursuit of politicized and/or personalized interests without a clear strategic focus contradicts popular interests.

Eventually, an army uprising in 1998 led to the president's ouster and a civil war. After the signing of a peace agreement, presidential elections were held in 2000. In September 2003, a coup took place and a transitional national government was appointed. Parliamentary elections were held in March 2004, and, in October of the same year, an army mutiny resulted in the killing of the chief of staff. Despite some stabilization in 2005, the political situation is still volatile and the elections that took place on June 19, 2005, will not necessarily ensure stability and lead to an improvement of the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable. In short, Guinea-Bissau is still a country in which political instability and lack of progress in governance contribute to the deterioration of potential economic and social opportunities.[9]

The main objective of this chapter is to provide the results from a recent small-scale household survey that gives insights into the opinions of the population about changes in its level of well-being over time, its trust in various local and national authorities, sources of conflicts at the local level, and ways with which the population deals with these conflicts. The first section provides a general background on the current state of governance as measured by various indicators and recent political developments. The detailed results from the analysis are provided in the second section. A brief conclusion follows.

9. On Guinea-Bissau's history and the transition to democracy, see among others Mendy (1994), Pélissier (1989), and Rudebeck (1999, 2004). See also more generally Berry (1993) and Mamdami (1996).

Governance and Recent Political Developments: A Brief Review

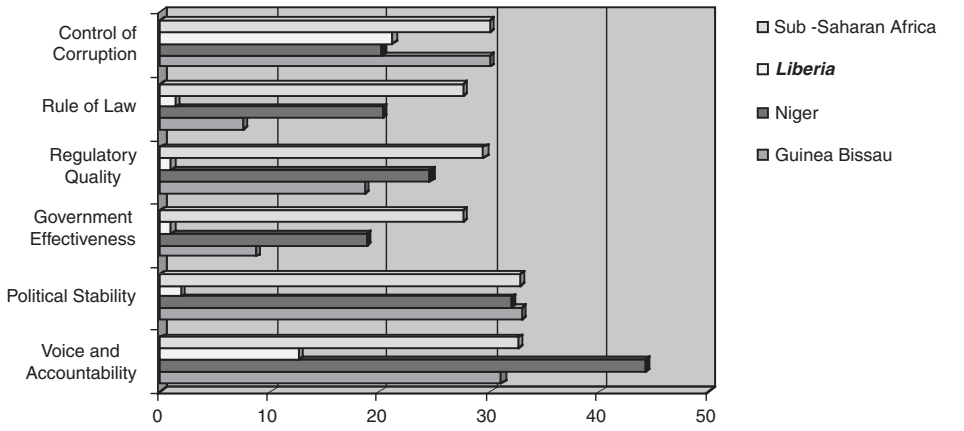
Indicators of Governance: International Comparisons

Institutions in Guinea-Bissau are characterized by a persistent tension that exist between formal and informal institutions as well as community-based (rural) and state-based organizations (Forrest 2003). The result of this fragility is that most institutions do not respond to the public interest in an efficient, effective, and fair way. This disarray, as well as poor institutional capacity, is further exacerbated by corruption (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2002).

While in some indicators of governance and accountability, Guinea-Bissau performs close to the average for Sub-Saharan countries (see Figure 3.1), rule of law and government effectiveness are among the lowest in the region. Most state institutions have been unable to generate or command long-term loyalties. This is partly explained by their lack of capacity to deliver services and benefits. In addition, social and political leaders have established strong paternalistic relationships with their constituencies without reaching out or bridging to other social groups, and thereby without building broader coalitions or strengthening the legitimacy of the existing state institutions. In the absence of strong state institutions, the population has strengthened their local networks and has learned how to count on their own forces to search for solutions to their problems. Local institutions (from neighborhood associations to the local schools and the traditional authorities) therefore perform many functions (mutual help, leisure, collective security, conflict resolution, and so on), some of which could be handled by the state.

The consequences of the 1998 conflict are still reflected across the country in the damaged infrastructure as well as in the weak public sector, existing insecurity, political instability, and crime. Again, while at the local level communities work together to resolve some immediate problems, the capacity to work together beyond the local dimension and to resolve differences in Guinea-Bissau is poor. Political risks and ethnic tensions are building

Figure 3.1 Selected Governance and Accountability Indicators, 2004



Source: Governance and Anti-Corruption Indicators database (World Bank). Available at: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2004/.

Table 3.1 Selected ICGR Indicators of Cohesion in 2005

	Government stability	Internal conflicts	Military politics	Religious tensions	Ethnic tensions	Average risk rating
Guinea-Bissau	5.5	7.0	1.5	5.0	3.0	52.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	8.9	8.5	2.5	4.1	3.2	56.2
Somalia (worst)	7.0	4.5	1.0	3.0	2.0	26.0
Botswana (best)	11.0	10.5	6.0	5.0	4.5	78.5

Source: International Country Risk Guide (ICRG). Available at http://www.icrgonline.com.

up. Over the past 10 years, there has been an increasing politicization of ethnicity, which has been conveniently used by self-serving leaders seeking to increase their legitimacy and power. As shown in Table 3.1, overall risk rating for Guinea-Bissau (according to the International Country Risk Guide database) is below the average for Sub-Saharan countries.

Thus, existing indicators suggest that there is a weak sense of public institutions and nation-state building in Guinea-Bissau. The accountability of formal institutions is rather limited and cohesion is poor. Social capital functions at the local level to establish networks that contribute to achieve discrete goals of various population groups, helping to provide services and support livelihoods. Within those networks, accountability is higher and reflects the paternalistic nature of the relationships between local leadership and the community or groups for which these leaders act as protectors, and hinges on intermediaries with larger social institutions. However, public institutions are not effective at the national level and have failed to gain public credibility. At the same time there is an increased fracture or disarticulation between national level institutions and leaderships and local communities and their authorities.

As stressed in Chapter 1,[10] it is important to realize that weaknesses in governance have impacts on the strategic management of key sectors of the economy. This can be illustrated through the case of the fishing sector. The sector's governance is constrained by its weak regulatory and legal framework, low institutional capacity, and modest qualified human resources. In terms of official policies, Guinea-Bissau has not had a coherent set of sector objectives since the fisheries management plan prepared in 1996. In the mid-1990s, the USAID-funded Trade and Investment Promotion Services (TIPS) program provided recommendations to the ministry of fisheries that led to the creation of annual fisheries management plans. The plans also included long-term programs aimed at moving the "offshore" industrial fishery gradually onshore. Since then, Guinea-Bissau has not developed official fisheries management plans or a coherent policy for the sector.

In practice, the fisheries sector policies of Guinea-Bissau have focused exclusively on maximizing public financial benefits from the sector (through fishing licenses and compensations collected from mainly foreign fleets and governments). Monitoring, control, and supervision (MCS); development of artisanal fisheries; and maintaining and improv-

10. Acemoglu (2003 and 2006), Acemoglu and Robinson (2006a, 2006b), and Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2002), Fosu (2001), and Rodrick (1999).

ing existing infrastructure have been lesser objectives, and have been largely unattainable given the institutional and financial constraints that the sector and the country face.

However, this heavy reliance of the government on fisheries sector revenues underscores both the importance and difficulty of strengthening the governance of the sector. This reliance undermines the bargaining power and negotiating options of the government vis-à-vis foreign governments seeking access agreements, potentially reducing the overall environmental and social benefits to the country of such agreements. Another equally important aspect of this dependence relates to the country's capacity and systems to collect, handle, allocate, and use natural resource rents for poverty reduction and social cohesion purposes. Given past concerns and allegations about corruption, attention toward strengthening mechanisms and systems for fiscal transparency and accountability is required.

Recent Political Developments

The recent presidential election that took place in June and July 2005 was meant to end the transitional arrangements that had been put in place since the ousting of former president Kumba Yala in September 2003. It was also meant to put an end to the postconflict transition that began after the civil war of 1998–9 and bring a return to constitutional and democratic rule in Guinea-Bissau following years of political instability and administrative chaos.

Some 22 presidential candidates, drawn from as many political parties, contested the first round of elections held on June 19, 2005. The three front-runners were all former presidents—João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira, previously the head of the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), who as the former military ruler and the country's first democratically elected president ruled the country from 1980 when he seized power through a coup against then president Luis Cabral, until 1999 when he was ousted because of clashes with the Army; Malam Bacai Sanhá, the PAIGC's official presidential candidate, who was the interim president following Vieira's departure; and Kumba Yala of the Partido de Renovação Social (PRS), who was the democratically elected president between 2000 and September 2003 until he was toppled through a bloodless coup.

Sanhá and Vieira headed to the second round, with Yala, the third-place candidate in the first round, declaring on July 2, 2005, that he would support the candidacy of Nino Vieira. With the backing of Kumba Yala—who is from the largest ethnic group comprising more than 30 percent of the population, the Balanta, and who is claimed to have the support and loyalty of key figures within the Army—Nino Vieira went on to win the second set of elections held on July 26, 2005. On July 28, 2005, the electoral commission, Commissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE), announced the victory of Nino Vieira, who had just returned to Guinea-Bissau after six years in exile in Portugal where he had been forced to flee because of indictments for corruption and human rights abuses during his 19-year-long rule of Guinea-Bissau. Nino Vieira won narrowly, receiving 52.4 percent of the vote, a little over 19,000 votes more than Sanhá. Rivals clashed in the capital shortly following the announcement, and Sanhá, the runner-up, and the ruling PAIGC, rejected the results by claiming electoral fraud[11] and referred the case first to the CNE for a recount and later

11. PAIGC rejected the results because of alleged electoral fraud, including the voting of foreigners in Gabu, Bafatá, and Quínara and the use of lists with unregistered voters.

to the supreme court.[12] Although some minor voting irregularities allegedly occurred, international monitors[13] declared the elections as free, fair, and transparent.

Nevertheless, the run-up to the elections and the period between the first and second rounds of voting was marred by fear and uncertainty. In May 2005, Kumba Yala, arguing that his own ousting from power in 2003 had been illegal, claimed he was still president and threatened to take power by other means. He backed his words up with action when he, together with a group of armed men, stormed the presidential palace for a few hours. Closer to the second round of elections, on July 17, 2005, two police officers died and 10 others were injured when armed men attempted to attack the presidential palace and the ministry of interior. This was allegedly carried out by supporters of the PRS and appears to have been motivated by the desire to avenge the death of four PRS supporters at a demonstration in June (EIU 2005). The attack reflects a general pattern of violent actions that have defined politics in Guinea-Bissau, particularly since the civil war in 1998–9. Moreover, following the dismissal by the supreme court of the challenge by the PAIGC, the political climate has been characterized by political paralysis which was only recently resolved when the current prime minister, Carlos Gomes Júnior, also of the PAIGC, finally decided to accept the results of the presidential elections.

The presidential inauguration finally took place on October 1, 2005, more than two months after the presidential elections, after a month-long delay orchestrated by the ruling party and the prime minister, who refused to recognize Vieira's electoral victory. While the ceremony itself went smoothly, the inauguration was marked by fear, amidst rumors—published by Senegalese newspaper *Wal Fadjri*—that a small group of soldiers had attacked a police station in Farim, in the Oio region, with the apparent intention of disrupting the inauguration. Moreover, none of the 19 heads of state invited to attend Vieira's swearing-in ceremony attended, heavily armed soldiers patrolled the streets, and many of the country's leading politicians—including the presidential runner-up, Sanhá—stayed home, raising fears of a return to years of instability.

President Vieira, however, aware that the legacy of his rule from 1980 to 1999 had made his re-election controversial and divisive has, so far, tried to counter these fears by continuing his electoral campaign mantra of reconciliation and national unity, promising to uphold the law, modernize the economy, defend freedom of expression, and reform the army. He has also confirmed that he is willing to cooperate with the current government and the prime minister, despite the ruling party's previous attempt to have his victory annulled. Vieira also seems to have gained the support of the military, with Armed Forces chief of staff Baptista Tagme Na Wai, and Navy chief of staff Bubo Na Tchuto, and Aniceto Na Fla, all pledging their support to the country's democratically elected civilian leaders. Nevertheless, the return to electoral democratic rule still leaves many issues unresolved which will continue to plague the political situation in Guinea-Bissau. Ultimately, many of the causes underlying the political instability and insecurity which has defined Guinea-Bissau during the last seven to eight years remain.

12. The supreme court rejected the case and issued a ruling on August 19 stating that Sanhá's appeal had taken place outside the timeframe established by law.

13. International monitors included groups from the European Union, the African Union, the United States, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CEPAL).

An immediate cause for concern relates to the current constellation of, and competition for, power between the executive and the legislative. Although the immediate dispute between Vieira and the PAIGC has been overcome, tensions between the president and the prime minister will surely remain—as a political analyst recently remarked, "with Gomes seeking to limit Vieira's powers and prerogatives, and Vieira seeking to undermine the premier's position within the PAIGC—the party Vieira once led."[14] This situation has been further complicated during the electoral campaign by an increasingly visible split within the PAIGC, between, on the one hand, its leadership, many of whom refused to recognize Vieira's victory and insisting the official PAIGC candidate Sanhá was the rightful winner, and, on the other hand, other party members—mainly drawn from the "old guard" who are still committed to their old party leader.

So far, it seems Vieira has the upper hand. With the backing of Kumba Yala—who Gomes Júnior has suggested may have been promised the role of prime minister in a new government in return for his support during the electoral campaign—Vieira has quickly moved to cement his own position and influence within the armed forces by confirming the reappointment of Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Wai, who fought alongside Vieira during the anticolonial struggle but who also belongs to the Balanta ethnic group. Moreover, it is also within Vieira's powers to form a new government immediately or to call early elections in a few months time, which could undermine the role and relative power of the ruling PAIGC and the current prime minister.

Already there seems to be some evidence that the new president is moving to consolidate power, by insisting that he, instead of the prime minister, will now preside over the meetings of the council of ministers, suggesting a more activist stance than the interim president who preceded him, Henrique Pereira Rosa, took. Nevertheless, there are also speculations that Gomes Júnior and the PAIGC took their time to accept the results from the presidential elections to gain political concessions from Vieira—in terms of promises of ministerial posts in a likely new government—and financial concessions from some of Vieira's external backers.[15]

Despite the president's pledges to adhere to and build national unity, this fierce competition over power reflects a lack of unity between the different political groups in the country. Political power in Guinea-Bissau is concentrated in an executive subject to limited checks and balances from weak democratic institutions. The state also retains main control over access to the majority of resources in the country. As a result, the stakes are high for the presidency and key political positions, undermining efforts at building national unity in a country with more than 20 different ethnic groups, widespread poverty, and great disparities between people. The lack of mechanisms for social and political accountability and representation extending beyond the capital of Bissau to the regions where the majority of the population resides further exacerbates this problem.

There is still a concern that the military, which has played a central role in the conflicts and political instability of the past, will continue to interfere (or be manipulated into interfering) in national politics and civilian affairs. Despite recent pledges by Wai to abide by the rule of law and the country's elected civilian leaders, the evidence of past actions, including

14. Comment by Chris Melville, analyst with Global Insight, in Menezes (2005).
15. Comment by Chris Melville, analyst with Global Insight, in Menezes (2005).

its role during the recent electoral campaign suggests that the military will continue to remain a source of instability in the future. Indeed, while this has in the past been partly a result of political manipulation of and equipping an inflated, unpaid army often sharing popular discontent, conditions have not sufficiently changed to expect that the military will refrain from intervening in the future. Moreover, the tense and volatile relationship between civilian power and the military is at its roots merely a reflection of a much deeper problem of governance.

Despite the recent elections, therefore, there is much to be done before Guinea-Bissau will complete its postconflict transition. Perhaps most importantly, the state continues to lack legitimacy and credibility amongst most members of the population. This is because of a variety of factors, especially its continued inability to provide basic services and infrastructure, particularly outside of the capital of Bissau, and the perceived persistence of corruption and mismanagement in the public sector. This contributes to a history of weak citizen-state relations, dating back to colonial times (Forrest 2003, Lourenço-Lindell 2002). Moreover, while political freedom/rights ratings have improved over the last decade since the process of political liberalization and transition to multiparty democratic politics in the early 1990s,[16] other estimates of governance have either worsened or largely remained the same (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2005), suggesting that the lack of government capacity and credibility—unless addressed by the new administration—will continue to pose a principal risk factor and source of potential instabilities in the future.

Household Perceptions: Results from a Recent Survey

Subjective Perceptions of Well-Being

Recent data on the perceptions of the population regarding the security situation and their institutions are available from a small-scale survey conducted in 2005 for the Integrated Poverty and Social Analysis (IPSA) report on Guinea-Bissau by the World Bank (2006). The survey was conducted in both urban and rural areas, with about 400 households participating. In this section, our objective is to present the results on the perception of the population of the quality of life and the extent to which it trusts institutions within the country. Table 3.2 provides data on the level of confidence that household heads have in various types of organizations. An assets index classifies the households according to their level of wealth.

The main variables used to create the index include variables related to the dwelling of the household (home ownership, number of rooms, number of bedrooms, type of toilet facility, principal source of water, principal source of energy for cooking, roof material, and wall material), various types of assets (generator, battery, gas or electrical stove, traditional stove, refrigerator, bed, mattress, mat, suitcase, television set, radio, cell phone, bicycle, motorbike, car, canoe, outboard motor for canoe, and various other types of furniture), productive assets (this included fishing tools, rice cleaners, cashew presses, tools to work the soil, and sewing machines), and various types of livestock. On the basis of this wealth

16. See the Freedom House Country Report for Guinea-Bissau available at http://www.freedomhouse.org.

index, households were ranked in three terciles. The poorest households are in the first tercile and the richest are in the third, with each of the three terciles accounting for one third of the households. Roughly speaking, the first tercile can be seen as representing the very poor, while the bottom two terciles account for the poor.

Table 3.2 also provides data on subjective perceptions of welfare in the sample. Clearly, an overwhelming majority of households declare that they are worse off today compared to before the war, with few variations between terciles. In addition, a majority also believes that they are worse off today than one year ago, but here the proportion is especially high among the poor or extreme poor. This suggests that the continuous state of instability may be more detrimental for poorer than wealthier households. The last four items in Table 3.2 are measures of subjective poverty and information on the number of meals per day, whether households feel that they are lacking food, and if they do, when this occurs. These data suggest that those classified in the bottom terciles see themselves as comparatively poorer than households in the top tercile; they have fewer meals per day on average, and they are also more likely to lack food (this affects a very large share of the poor), especially during the rainy season.

Role of Social Networks[17]

The data in Table 3.2 suggest that there is a high degree of poverty and vulnerability in Guinea-Bissau. Yet social networks often seem to provide crucial sources of support for poor households, particularly during times of stress and coping. Indeed the resilience of the population in the face of hardship could probably not be explained if it had not been for the minimal protection offered to many households by "safety nets" that poor households build (Lourenço-Lindell 2002). Nevertheless, it is important not to romanticize the notion and capacity of social networks to sustain poor households. The poorest of the poor are sometimes excluded from such networks—social assets, like other assets, may be resources they do not have access to. Other networks are based on hierarchical and nonegalitarian patron-client relations that while providing some source of security to the poorer client, the relationship may still be abusive. Hence, social networks are not necessarily a panacea to solve the welfare problems of the poor.

In Guinea-Bissau there exist a range of social networks, the most common of which are those based on kinship and family, village-membership, religion, and neighborhood ties. Lourenço-Lindell (2002) noted that the networks differ in terms of their durability, the types of claims that can be made, and in terms of the power balance that they appear to exhibit (kin and market-based, instrumental and altruistic, hierarchical and egalitarian, and so on). Kinship ties are often important sources of food and money, both for consumption purposes as well as for market activities. Neighbors in urban areas living within the same house or compound provide a similar role. Also in urban areas, relations of assistance develop at the market place in a variety of ways. There were partnerships between sellers in the same trade who assist each other, sometimes pooling resources and contacts. Some traders count on credit from suppliers. *Abota*s, the rotating savings groups referred to earlier, is another key resource. Another kind of cooperation consisted of organized

17. This section relies in large part on Lourenço-Lindell (2002).

Table 3.2 Subjective Perceptions of Well-Being, 2005

	Tercile			Area		
	1	2	3	Urban	Rural	Total
Change in well-being versus before the war						
Got better	14.18	12.06	15.79	12.18	15.06	13.98
Same	9.22	9.93	7.52	7.05	10.04	8.92
Got worse	75.89	77.30	76.69	80.77	74.13	76.63
Not applicable	0.71	0.71	0.00	0.00	0.77	0.48
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Change in well-being versus last year						
Got better	28.47	27.66	40.14	33.73	31.03	32.08
Same	18.06	15.60	9.86	10.84	16.86	14.52
Got worse	53.47	56.74	50.00	55.42	52.11	53.40
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Household situation versus community						
Very poor	33.83	29.69	16.92	23.33	29.05	26.85
Poor	4.51	3.13	4.62	4.00	4.15	4.09
Medium	45.11	57.03	50.77	50.67	51.04	50.90
Rich	15.79	9.38	26.92	21.33	14.94	17.39
The most rich	0.75	0.78	0.77	0.67	0.83	0.77
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
How many meals do you take in a day?						
One	43.97	29.41	26.09	25.31	38.34	33.25
Two	37.59	43.38	44.20	46.30	38.74	41.69
Three or more	18.44	27.21	29.71	28.40	22.92	25.06
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Lack of food						
Yes	93.71	95.74	73.24	79.52	92.69	87.56
No	6.29	4.26	26.76	20.48	7.31	12.44
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
If lack of food, when?						
End of dry season	0.00	4.51	2.00	1.57	2.52	2.19
Rainy season	60.61	55.64	45.00	42.52	60.92	54.52
Beginning of rainy season	7.58	6.77	5.00	2.36	8.82	6.58
Beginning and end of rainy season	3.03	0.75	11.00	8.66	2.10	4.38
Dry season	7.58	8.27	8.00	8.66	7.56	7.95
Rainy season and dry season	3.79	0.75	1.00	1.57	2.10	1.92
Others/nonresponse	1.52	0.00	1.00	0.79	0.84	0.82
All the time	15.91	23.31	27.00	33.86	15.13	21.64
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Authors' estimation from 2005 IPSA survey.

groups among day workers (*surni*), where men share job opportunities and redistribute incomes. At the village level, there has been a revival of traditional social clubs (*mandjuandades*), during the last two decades that provide recreational and some level of economic assistance to their members. These informal, communal groups, which may include both women and men, are structured according to age. Within a *tabanca,* a new group is established about every three years, and is often named after the major event occurring in the *tabanca* that year. In Caió, the groups go under the name *uran;* the latest group was established there in 2004 and is called *uran telemobel,* since this was the year cell phones became popular in Guinea-Bissau. Finally, some households participate in local religious groupings—Catholic, Evangelical, and Islamic congregations. Some of these, however, may be more important in terms of providing personal acquaintances and contacts for cooperation in other social settings, such as the market, than in terms of the volume of material assistance they provide to needy members.

Individual or household vulnerability, therefore, is partly a reflection of which combinations or types of social networks—if any—one has access to. Indeed, households and individuals vary in their access to social networks and are therefore not equally protected against shocks and unexpected events. The more vulnerable individuals and groups are those that are more isolated, with a very small number of sources that they can rely on for assistance. Secondly, many households or individuals also do not seem to be in a position to combine different sorts of these "safety nets." Some remain reliant on one type of network, seemingly unable to select those networks they prefer and to break free from those they deem oppressive and disadvantageous.

This vulnerability may also be exacerbated during periods of general economic downturn—the time when social assistance is often needed the most. Economic hardship seems to erode the collaborative efforts among the poor as well as the material basis of their support networks. As a result, many are forced to rely on their own resources, as they perceive other members of their networks as being as bad off as they are. The redistribution of groups among casual workers, for example, have over the last couple of years become less and less reliable, because of a continued influx of unemployed youth into the labor market, a reduction in employment opportunities, and declining incomes. In a situation of increasing impoverishment, the assistance provided by religious groups is also put under pressure. And, as noted earlier, participation in the *abotas* also becomes difficult for those unable to comply with regular contributions in times of uncertain and irregular incomes. As such, it may seem that those that rely exclusively on market-based networks—while having more flexibility and choice—may end up being more vulnerable than those that also, or even only, have access to kinship-based sources of support, which may be more tolerant of the inability to reciprocate during long periods of time. Given this, it would be worth asking the question of whether it may be likely that those who through their social status had limited access to productive resources—single, widowed, or abandoned women, (unmarried youth) and nonnative migrants—may also have lesser access to kinship-based networks.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is a high level of inequality in Guinea-Bissau. This inequality, as well as to some extent diversity itself, are likely to undermine the formation or maintenance of social capital. The country comprises some 20 different ethnic groups, underscoring the fact that social capital formation may not always be durable and sustainable, particularly in urban settings where inequality and diversity is at greater display. Yet

at the same time, it is not possible to associate inequality with any one particular issue. In fact, when asked about potential sources of inequality in the country, households mentioned that religion, age, and gender were more important factors at the source of existing inequalities than ethnicity. Geographic location played a less important role in the mindset of the population, even though it can be demonstrated that it actually plays an important role in explaining differences in well-being between households.

Table 3.3 Factors Contributing to Inequality in 2005

	Tercile			Area		
	1	2	3	Urban	Rural	Total
Ethnicity						
A lot	4.65	7.41	14.39	14.10	5.42	8.84
A little	25.58	31.11	34.85	35.90	27.08	30.56
No	69.77	61.48	50.76	50.00	67.50	60.61
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Religion						
A lot	13.99	12.86	34.31	31.87	13.08	20.24
A little	25.17	28.57	22.63	21.88	27.69	25.48
No	60.84	58.57	43.07	46.25	59.23	54.29
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Age						
A lot	35.11	19.26	26.52	21.15	30.58	26.88
A little	14.50	22.22	30.30	30.77	16.94	22.36
No	50.38	58.52	43.18	48.08	52.48	50.75
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gender						
A lot	10.85	14.81	20.74	20.63	12.13	15.54
A little	34.11	25.93	36.30	32.50	31.80	32.08
No	55.04	59.26	42.96	46.88	56.07	52.38
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Geographic location						
A lot	3.88	10.53	16.79	18.83	5.02	10.43
A little	34.11	27.07	32.82	31.82	30.96	31.30
No	62.02	62.41	50.38	49.35	64.02	58.27
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Authors' estimation from 2005 IPSA survey.

Trust in Different Institutions

The 2005 IPSA survey also provided data on public perceptions of different institutions and confirmed that local-level institutions are more trustworthy than central or local gov-

ernments, the military, or political parties. While we do not know the level of trust of various institutions, the data enables us to test which institutions benefit from the highest level of trust among households. Table 3.4 shows that local schools and health posts are perceived as the most trustworthy institutions. This trust is explained by the services provided by these institutions and the level of participation that the community has in parent associations and health-post teams. This trust appears to be particularly strong in rural areas, where the local school and the health post are the only institutions that are present and have some legitimacy for the community. The judiciary, the police, religious organizations, and traditional authorities have much lower levels of trust. Note that there are differences between terciles. Among the poor, trust in local institutions dealing with education and health as well as religious issues is even stronger, relatively speaking (that is, as compared

Table 3.4 The Institutions Most Trusted by Citizens, 2005

	Tercile			Area		
	1	2	3	Urban	Rural	Total
First-most trusted organization (%)						
Religious organizations	12.21	5.65	9.30	8.78	9.32	9.11
Political parties	1.53	0.00	1.55	1.35	0.85	1.04
Local government	0.00	1.61	5.43	4.73	0.85	2.34
NGOs	6.87	0.00	17.83	15.54	3.81	8.33
Traditional authorities	2.29	4.03	1.55	0.00	4.24	2.60
Schools	42.75	37.10	31.01	31.76	40.25	36.98
Health centers	29.01	43.55	26.36	31.08	33.90	32.81
Army	0.76	0.00	0.00	0.68	0.00	0.26
Police	2.29	1.61	0.78	0.68	2.12	1.56
Justice	0.76	4.84	6.20	4.73	3.39	3.91
Central government	1.53	1.61	0.00	0.68	1.27	1.04
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Second-most trusted organization (%)						
Religious organizations	7.27	3.54	13.40	11.50	5.80	7.81
Political parties	1.82	0.88	4.12	1.77	2.42	2.19
Local government	1.82	2.65	4.12	4.42	1.93	2.81
NGOs	0.91	0.88	6.19	4.42	1.45	2.50
Traditional authorities	6.36	5.31	2.06	0.88	6.76	4.69
Schools	30.00	38.94	23.71	28.32	32.85	31.25
Health centers	45.45	35.40	36.08	36.28	40.58	39.06
Army	1.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.97	0.63
Police	3.64	5.31	5.15	7.08	3.38	4.69
Justice	0.00	6.19	4.12	5.31	2.42	3.44
Central government	0.91	0.88	1.03	0.00	1.45	0.94
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Authors' estimation from 2005 IPSA survey.

to trust in other institutions), than among the better off. Indeed, at least some of the better off tend to have higher levels of trust than the very poor in NGOs, the justice system, and the local government. In all three terciles, very few find that the police, the army, political parties, and the central government are very trustworthy.

Note that there are also some differences between urban and rural areas. For example, trust in traditional authorities is higher among the rural population, while trust in NGOs is more prevalent among urban dwellers. It is interesting to highlight these differences because they are related to the different roles these institutions have. In urban settings, trust in NGOs appears to be related to the role NGOs have in service delivery and access to goods and services (such as concession of credit to members and so on). Trust in traditional authorities, while higher in rural areas, is still low. This is partly explained by the fact that traditional authorities are perceived as controlling access to information and mediating the relationship with outsiders. At the same time, in rural as well as urban settings, there are multiple local community-based organizations that inspire trust and encourage people to participate and engage in activities that play an important role in the survival of the community and its families.

Security, Sources of Conflict at the Local Level, and the Issue of Land

Table 3.5 provides data on perceptions regarding changes in the security situation and sources of conflicts at the local level. Only half of the households consider that the security situation has improved over the last year and that the share of the population that believes that the situation has deteriorated is higher among the bottom tercile. Data on the sources of local conflicts are also revealing. In a country such as Guinea-Bissau, which has experienced a great deal of population movements across the whole subregion over centuries and recently was engaged in a civil war that led to the displacement of thousands of people, there is a risk that segments of the population end up in situations with limited access to productive resources, and hence, in a state of poverty and vulnerability. This also means that competition for productive resources will be important, and indeed, Table 3.5 suggests that apart from internal family issues, most local conflict situations seem to arise from issues related to land, water, and livestock, especially in rural areas. Table 3.5 also shows that very poor and poor households tend to rely mostly on traditional authorities to solve conflicts, while the better off rely more on the police.

Chapter 5 will discuss issues related to the livelihoods of the population across the country's regions. Here, it is worth discussing in more detail the issue of land. In fact, although this cannot be tested here, in many cases, issues related to access to land and other productive resources involve a family component because of differences in access between genders. Specifically, access to land and labor in Guinea-Bissau, like in most other African countries, requires membership in social institutions, in particular autochthonous kinship and domestic groups.[18] Critical productive resources are vested within these groups, and, in most cases, these resources are principally controlled by senior men. Marriage is the foundation of these groups and is the institution through which men are allocated land. Women gain use rights over land through the land allo-

18. Autochthonous groups refer to those descended from the original founders of the community.

Table 3.5 Perceptions of the Security Situation and Sources of Conflict, 2005

	Tercile			Area		
	1	2	3	Urban	Rural	Total
Change in security situation (%)						
Improvement	45.83	42.25	57.75	54.82	44.66	48.60
No difference	9.72	11.97	11.27	12.65	9.92	10.98
Deterioration	42.36	44.37	30.28	31.33	43.89	39.02
No data	2.08	1.41	0.70	1.20	1.53	1.40
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sources of conflict (%)						
Land	14.60	21.8	17.42	18.95	17.27	17.91
Water	14.60	13.53	16.67	9.15	18.47	14.93
Family	20.44	12.03	32.58	31.37	15.66	21.64
Livestock	34.31	27.07	17.42	18.95	30.92	26.37
Fishing	0.00	1.50	2.27	1.96	0.80	1.24
Extraction activities	0.00	0.00	0.76	0.65	0.00	0.25
Participation to community live	1.46	1.50	7.58	8.50	0.40	3.48
Religion	0.73	1.50	0.00	0.65	0.80	0.75
Wealth	0.73	1.50	0.00	1.31	0.40	0.75
Others	13.14	19.55	5.31	8.49	15.26	12.69
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Whom do you turn to in case of conflict?						
Police	23.57	15.33	64.54	64.24	15.42	34.69
Traditional authority	56.43	52.55	17.73	20.00	56.52	42.11
Police and traditional authority	9.29	3.65	5.67	3.64	7.91	6.22
Family	5.00	16.79	4.26	3.64	11.86	8.61
Others	5.71	11.68	7.80	8.48	8.29	8.37
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Authors' estimation from 2005 IPSA survey.

cated to their husbands.[19] They are also primarily able to call upon and mobilize labor through the institution of marriage.

Unmarried women or women in female-headed households, unmarried male youth, and "outsiders"—that is, those that have not descended from the community founders—are also restricted in their access to productive resources. The access to productive resources and participation in social life by nonautochthones depends on the acceptance

19. In rare cases, women can also own land in their own right. Widowed women might inherit land in trust for their sons, which is then allocated to the sons upon marriage. Women who are single or divorced and widows who have lost all their sons may be forced to return to their families and might be given a small area to farm. Some widowed or otherwise single women have to negotiate access to land every season.

and goodwill of senior, male "patron" autochthones—frequently, the *Chefe de Tabanca*—and normally can only occur by marrying into a local autochthonous family. The "client" outsider would be expected to return the favor in a number of ways, although these relationships are never equal and work in favor of the more powerful patron who has greater bargaining power. Field work carried for this study picked up on the problem of access to land by nonnatives (nonautochthones)—including immigrants from the Casamance region of Senegal to the north of the country and migrants internal to Guinea-Bissau, who as a result were either left without the ability to farm (in some cases) or gained limited and conditional access to land. Those that gained access to land often had to abide by a set of conditions, such as being limited to cultivating rice, corn, or cassava, and not being allowed to use the land for fruit and cashew plantations. Access rights were also only temporary, meaning that nonnative households had to renegotiate the access to and use of land on an annual basis. Land received was also often of lesser quality, which in some parts of the country (for example, the less fertile east) can mean chronic food shortages.

Women's access to land and other productive resources was also seen to be affected by this (see Box 3.1). As women only gain access to land through their husbands, which creates a certain level of dependency of women on men, women who had been abandoned, divorced, or widowed would in some cases find themselves without access to land. While women were, in most cases, still provided with land, though mainly on a temporary basis, the more serious problem in these cases was their access to and ability to mobilize labor to help work and cultivate the land. The extent of this problem seemed to vary according to ethnicity and religion, with women in the east seeming to be left more vulnerable if single, widowed, or abandoned than in other areas. Anecdotal evidence suggesting an increase in the abandonment of women because of their reported enhanced income-earning status provides a cause for concern.

The issue of access to land is of immediate importance given the current national and legislative debate on reforming land access policies. A new land law was adopted in 1998, but the regulations required to implement the law are still under discussion. While the new law makes a grand leap forward in recognizing traditional authorities' role in managing and distributing communal land, the discussion here underscores the importance of also addressing the specific needs of women, youth, and migrants in accessing land. Moreover, the regulations also need to take seriously the many latent yet intensifying conflicts over access to land, particularly those between livestock breeders and agriculturalists as well as between traditional communities and private investors (including *ponteiros*). Conflicts over land in urban areas are also becoming more serious, most of which have been between urban settlers and the Municipal Council of Bissau (CMB). The CMB has taken on the responsibility of managing land in Bissau and claims ownership of much of the land that is currently being inhabited by poor dwellers, particularly in the outskirts of the city of Bissau. The local government has also encroached extensively on customary land in Bissau and nearby Biombo, literally expropriating the Pepel (native owners of these lands) of large shares of their land. An area in Alto Bandim, for example, which was originally used by local farmers for cashew production, but which was expropriated by the municipal government without any compensation and later sold to private persons or turned into luxury residences, is the recently built Ministers' Quarters on Alto Bandim (Lourenço-Lindell 2002). Perhaps most importantly, efforts need to be made to ensure the implementation capacity

Box 3.1 Land Regulation in Guinea-Bissau—A Review

Under colonial administration, two types of property rights had been conceptualized under Decree 43893 of 1961: the land right of the state and that of the communities called reserved areas. The reserved areas had covered areas actually under cultivation and residential areas, yet excluded the areas under fallow and extraction activities (fishing and forestry). The Land Law 4/75 adopted after the independence in 1975 transferred land property to the state. The new Land Law (Law No. 5/98) adopted in 1998 articulated three objectives: (1) guarantee land rights to local communities for economic use; (2) acknowledge customary land regime by representative institutions; and (3) stimulate land investment by creating market value.

Contrary to the previous legislation, the new law has authorized and introduced permanent or temporary land concessions both in urban and rural areas. In addition, the law has created a tax mechanism to increase land-use efficiency aimed at dismantling large-scale farms (*latifundios*) unable to demonstrate income generating capacities. It has also permitted the formation of an administration commission of land whose objective is to safeguard the law enforcement and consorted interventions in land use. The land in Guinea-Bissau has been declared a property of the state constituting a common property of all the people (Article 20, Section 1). Yet, all citizens have a right to private use of land, and the state can grant the right of private use to individuals and collective units and national and foreign entity for economic and social development objectives (Article 40, Section 1). Such land rights for private use are recognized either by: (1) customary use (*uso consuetudinário*), as envisaged land use by traditional local communities, and (2) concession (Article 40, Section 3). The present law therefore recognizes land-use rights based on customary use practiced by traditional local communities. This is an important instrument to recognize and guarantee traditional rights in a modern legislation context.

The private land use right under customary use is a permanent title and can be exercised in rural and urban land including reserved areas for local communities (Article 16). The land under the customary use covers cultivated and inhabited zones as well as unexplored zones and resources attributed to local community residents through their representatives. The administration and distribution of the land under customary use by the local community residents shall be exercised according to the custom and practices of each community, and any omitted part shall be governed by this law (Article 17, Section 1, 2). The law clearly stipulates in Article 17, Section 3, that the state recognizes the residents' right for community administration and exploration of the land, forest, and other natural resources according to local custom and practices. The private land-use right under customary use is guaranteed by the state independent of written contract or register, obliging the land commission to promote and constantly update the registration services (Article 17, Section 4). This right shall be transferred by successive inheritance and transferable to other resident(s) within the local community free of charge, according to the local practices independent of endorsement by contract and register (Article 18).

Transfer of the private land-use right under customary use to the third party, other than those referred to in Article 18, shall be made in agreement with the state and the local communities and follow the process to be applied in the concession. In such cases, the population of the local communities retains the right to freely and directly negotiate the terms of transfer in accordance with the conditions specified in Article 23 (Article 19). The private land-use right under customary use can be converted into the private land-use right under concession (Article 21). The private land-use right under concession is granted by administrative contract and has a duration of 90 years to be automatically renewed if not revoked (Article 22). This right is transferable by contract or inheritance upon request for official authorization. The process of grant, transfer of, and conversion into the private land-use right under concession involves tax obligations and the right is subject to annual land tax payment (Article 38). The land tax revenues shall be distributed in the following manner; (1) 60 percent to the public treasury, (2) 20 percent to local communities, (3) 10 percent to regional and sectoral administrative authorities, and (4) 10 percent to the Land Commissions.

Source: World Bank (2006).

of the new law and its regulations, without which the land law will have little impact on the ground.

Note finally that while this is not apparent in Table 3.4, the importance of accessing labor is also an acute concern. The availability of labor in rural areas seems to be decreasing. Field work documented a so-called "rural exodus," primarily of youth escaping rural areas in search of further education and better life opportunities in urban towns and cities. In addition to the thousands of uneducated youth it adds to the informal and unemployed labor market in Bissau, this exodus leaves rural areas without the productive capacity required to farm the lands and ensure sustainable rural livelihoods. Again, however, households with large proportions of elderly and female members are at a particular disadvantage.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided results from a recent small-scale household survey on changes in citizens' well-being over time, their trust in various local and national authorities, sources of conflicts at the local level, and the ways with which citizens deal with these conflicts. There is a clear perception among the population that its well-being has deteriorated as a result of the 1998 conflict as well as an increase in violence and lack of security even after the conflict, with no clear sign of improvement. The population has little trust in national institutions, such as the army, the police, the judicial system, and the central government. The results also suggest that local conflicts often emerge because of the competition for scarce productive resources, but poorer households deal with these conflicts in a different way than wealthier households.

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